

DUTIES OF CLERKS IN THE DES MOINES INDEPENDENT
COMMUNITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERM USED

Continual additions to the curriculum have imposed more duties on teachers and principals. A real need has developed for assistance in taking care of routine tasks not concerned with teaching. These routine jobs can well be taken care of by clerks in the offices of public elementary schools.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this project was to make a survey of the duties of clerks in the Des Moines Independent Community Elementary Schools, and in light of what authorities considered essential and pertinent, make recommendations that might be used to improve the efficiency of instruction in these schools.

Importance of the study. Teachers and principals are trained to teach and lead boys and girls. To be able to bring out the greatest potential in each individual takes time and undivided attention. Routine duties such as pupil accounting, completing forms and filing could better be done by an office clerk.¹ Expanding the jobs that could be done by a clerk, thus

¹L. M. Rich, "Clerical Help For Principals," National Elementary Principal, XXXIII (December, 1953), 12.

freeing the teacher to teach and the principal to counsel and guide his teachers, should help provide better learning situations.¹

II. PROCEDURE

In this report, nonteaching duties of the teachers and the principals in the elementary schools are considered. The examination of the duties now being performed by the clerks in Des Moines elementary public schools was made by use of a questionnaire sent to each elementary principal.

Sources of data. The primary sources of data for this project were professional textbooks, journals, handbooks, and pamphlets which have special reference to clerical duties in elementary schools. Interviews with administrative personnel who are responsible for clerical help in the Des Moines elementary schools were held. Data were also obtained through the use of a questionnaire (see Appendix) sent to the elementary school principals in Des Moines. In addition a list of clerical duties was secured from the Research Division of the National Association of Educational Secretaries. This group is a department of the National Education Association.

Plan of procedure. The method in this survey was to read the accessible books and periodicals on the subject of

¹Ibid., p. 14.

of clerical duties and responsibilities to ascertain criteria by which the present duties of clerks in the Des Moines elementary schools could be examined. In addition, administrative personnel responsible for clerks in Des Moines were interviewed to determine the duties they had in mind when clerks were first assigned to the elementary schools in the fall of 1949.

The present duties of the clerks in the Des Moines elementary schools were then examined in the light of the criteria drawn from a synthesis of authoritative opinion as expressed in the literature. A recommended plan for duties was then proposed.

Limitations of the study. This study was limited to the duties of clerks in the fifty-six public elementary schools in Des Moines, Iowa.

Definition of the term used. In many articles the non-certificated workers in local school offices are referred to as the secretary-clerk. In this project the clerk is referred to as an employee of a school who does routine and mechanical clerical work in the school office.

The organization of the project. The organization of this project includes four chapters. The introductory chapter contains a statement of the problem and its significance, the

scope of the project, sources of data for the study, the plan of procedure, limitations of the study, definition of the term used, and the organization of the project.

Chapter II is a report of findings on clerical duties in elementary schools.

Chapter III presents a report of the results of the survey.

Chapter IV consists of the summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

REPORT OF FINDINGS ON CLERICAL DUTIES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Teachers, principals, and administrators of the elementary schools have long been disturbed by the amount of time consumed by routine tasks that take them away from their primary job of teaching and leadership. The records they keep and duties they perform are necessary to maintain a well-organized school, but someone who is not charged with the duties of teaching and guidance could perform the clerical tasks. Elsbree stated, "To perform his duties adequately, it is safe to say it is imperative that today's principal have clerical assistance."¹ Not only the principal, but the teacher as well can be aided by a decrease in clerical duties and interruptions. Walter wrote, "Some of this is unavoidable; some can be reduced. The secretary should periodically check her procedures and practices to see if there is some way in which she can further reduce these inroads on a teacher's time and teaching."²

¹Willard S. Elsbree and H. J. McNally, Elementary School Administration and Supervision (New York: American Book Company, 1951), p. 466.

²Ralph Walter, "The School Secretary and the Faculty," Educational Digest, XIV (May, 1949), 35.

I. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CLERKS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Elementary schools in the nineteenth century did not have the need of clerical help as markedly as do modern schools. Those schools kept fewer records on pupils and required fewer supplies, due to a more rigid curriculum. The principal was a full-time teacher having no special place for an office. Reavis reported that by 1875 space designated for office purposes began to appear in architectural plan of elementary school buildings and that these spaces were just good-sized closets.¹

With the principal teaching full time, the need for a larger office was not felt. Reavis also noted that as late as 1900 such large city school systems as Detroit, Chicago, and St. Louis were not including office spaces as functional units. It was in 1920 that Chicago, one of the first large school systems, gave the principal an administrative and supervisory status. At this time the office was beginning to be designed to further the work of the principal.²

The placing of the emphasis of administration and supervision on the principal, the increase in school population, and the addition of involved record keeping brought

¹William C. Reavis and others, Administering the Elementary School (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1953), pp. 241-66.

²Ibid.

about the need for clerical assistance.

II. HISTORY OF CLERICAL HELP IN DES MOINES

ELEMENTARY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A committee of four, W. C. Findley, George W. Hohl, Superintendent N. D. McCombs, and Assistant Superintendent C. O. Hoyt, were the originators of the plan for clerks in the Des Moines public elementary schools, according to a personal interview with Mr. Findley.¹ This committee had discussed the idea of clerical help in the elementary schools for a number of years before the plan materialized.

It was the feeling of this group that the elementary principal should spend more time supervising in the classroom. Some of the principals were responsible for two and three buildings, often with a total enrollment of between eight-hundred and one-thousand children. This meant sometimes as many as thirty teachers under the supervision of one individual. Thus was need shown for clerical assistance to keep the increasing number of records and free the principal for more time as a supervisor in the classroom.

The Des Moines Board of Education authorized the hiring of five clerks for the school year 1949-1950, for the building or group of buildings under the supervision of one principal

¹Personal interview, W. C. Findley, Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Des Moines, Iowa, and the writer, July, 1960.

whose pupil enrollment was in excess of one-thousand pupils. For some reason unknown to Mr. Findley, only four clerks were hired at the beginning of the term. However, one more clerk was added at the close of the 1949-50 school term.

For the 1951-52 school year a new plan went into operation authorizing the addition of eleven new clerks. This new policy stipulated that a principal was entitled clerical assistance if one of the following statements suited his situation: (1) if the principal were responsible for three schools, (2) if the principal had two schools and one or more cafeterias, and (3) if the total number of pupils enrolled were in excess of nine-hundred. At the close of the 1951-52 school year there were sixteen clerks employed, in keeping with the above regulations.

The number of clerks in the elementary schools has risen steadily since the modest beginning in 1949. During the 1958-59 school year there were thirty-six such employees in the elementary schools, or one clerk for every principal regardless of pupil load, number of buildings, or absence or presence of cafeterias.

It was not the intention of the four members of the administration who started the movement toward having clerks in the elementary schools that the clerk was to do clerical work solely for the principal. The intention was that the clerk make herself available to the teachers in the building

for the purpose of assisting with their clerical work when she was able to do so. Individual teachers would clear the work they wanted the clerk to do through the principal.

Each building was unique as to the exact duties the clerk would be responsible for doing. For this reason the committee left the jobs of the clerical worker up to the discretion of the principals in the various buildings. No uniform handbook of ways of handling work that would be common to all buildings has been formulated to date.

III. NEED OF GUIDE OR CLERICAL HANDBOOK

It is necessary to the welfare of those concerned, the principal, teachers, and clerks, that they know just what duties the clerk's job entails.¹ In addition, the clerk's knowledge of the procedure to follow in carrying out the various routines expedites the work. Luck reported the value of a handbook to analyze procedure, eliminate unnecessary routines, record the jobs to be done and the order in which to do them, and suggested ways of doing them.² Hauser also noted the contributions of a handbook to the efficiency of clerical help, especially for those clerks new at the job.³

¹Elsbree, op. cit., p. 469.

²Martha S. Luck, "Professional Training and Status for the Administrative Secretary," Nation's Schools, XLVII (April, 1951), 41.

³L. J. Hauser, "Office Procedure Improves Remarkably After Secretaries Work Together to Produce a Handbook," Nation's Schools, XLVIII (July, 1951), 31.

There are certain routine jobs having to do with records and their keeping that could be outlined clearly in a handbook. There are other jobs that are peculiar to a particular building and need to be outlined and explained by the principal. One writer said, "Training in the specialized and routine school duties is usually given by the principal in an elementary school."¹ Once these jobs are outlined their procedure should be recorded for future reference. Such information could be recorded in a section of a common handbook on pages designed especially for that purpose.

In regard to the preparation of handbooks Kyte stated:

Some superintendents or principals prepare handbooks of detailed guidance for the school secretary. These handbooks reduce the time that an executive spends in training her and furnish definite directions which she can follow. The handbooks include suggested work schedules; information about administrative and supervisory officers, rules and regulations; directions regarding the care and handling of all office machines, specific information about the preparation of reports, the filing of records and reports, telephone usage, the handling of funds, public relations, aid to visitors, cautions regarding personal appearance.²

The responsibility of the principal toward helping the clerk do a better job is emphasized in small as well as large school systems. Elsbree and McNally wrote, "Much can be

¹Marie A. Gallagher, "School Secretaries Are Career Secretaries," Business Education World, XXI (November, 1950), 151.

²George C. Kyte, The Principal At Work (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1952), p. 447.

accomplished by discussing the demands of the job with the secretary, and formulating with her the procedures to be used.¹

¹Elsbree and McNally, op. cit., p. 471.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF QUESTIONNAIRE ON CLERICAL HELP IN DES MOINES ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

I. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

A questionnaire was sent to fifty-three elementary schools in Des Moines, Iowa, to be completed by the principal in the building. All of the questionnaires were returned. Fifty-two of the fifty-three questionnaires were answered. One building did not have clerical help during the 1959-60 school year, so there was no information to report.

The items used in the questionnaire by the investigator were secured from a compiled list of clerical duties from the Research Division of the National Association of Educational Secretaries, journals, handbooks, and pamphlets. In addition, the Director of Elementary Education¹ and several principals were consulted concerning the items for the questionnaire. Four principals in the Des Moines Public Schools examined the questionnaire for validation purposes.

Many principals showed interest in making the study complete by writing additional duties the clerks perform in their buildings. Some principals made favorable comments as

¹Dr. Merle A. Wilson, Director of Elementary Education, Des Moines, Iowa.

to the worth of the clerk in their building.

The data from the questionnaire were compiled to find out if personnel in the building having a clerk on a full-time basis received more help than in buildings where clerks were shared.

Principals in every building reported the clerk was "always" productively occupied.

In the item included in the section "General Office Work Done by the Clerk" all twenty-one single building principals and twenty-seven principals who have two buildings reported that the clerk handles money. One principal of two buildings and one principal-consultant reported the clerks did not handle money in their buildings. The ways the clerks handle money are shown in Table I.

Comments in addition to the tabulated results for the items under "general office" work were as follows:

1. Six principals, one of whom was a single building principal, reported that "sells supplies directly to children" did not apply.
2. Twenty-five principals reported that "handles cafeteria money" did not apply. Four of this group were single Building principals and three were principal-consultants.
3. Thirteen principals reported that "handles milk money" did not apply. Three of these thirteen responses

were from single building principals; and three additional responses were from principal-consultants.

In the area of "typing," under "General Office Work," the clerk was reported as doing the various jobs as shown in Table II.

One single building principal reported "the agenda for staff meeting" did not apply. One principal of two buildings marked the item "types annual letters to teachers" as not applying.

Some principals did not indicate the frequency each item was performed so totals do not always equal the number of questionnaires returned.

The clerk has form report responsibilities in every building. Three principals did not reply "yes" or "no" to this question; however, they did answer all items following the question.

Table III shows the items concerning reports answered by the principals.

The three principal-consultants reported the items "bus transportation public and bus transportation school district" did not apply in their situations. Eleven single building principals and eleven two-building principals indicated "bus transportation public" did not apply. Nine single building principals and thirteen two-building principals marked "bus transportation school district" as not applying.

TABLE I

MONEY HANDLED BY CLERKS, FREQUENCY OF PERFORMANCE, AND
NUMBER OF BUILDINGS SERVED, DES MOINES ELEMENTARY
SCHOOLS, IOWA, 1959-60

Type of Performance	Responses									
	Always		Frequently		Occasionally		Rarely		Never	
	Single	Two-	Single	Two-	Single	Two-	Single	Two-	Single	Two-
	Build-	Build-	Build-	Build-	Build-	Build-	Build-	Build-	Build-	Build-
	ing	ing	ing	ing	ing	ing	ing	ing	ing	ing
Handles school accounts	14	19	2	6	2	3	-	-	3	2
Writes checks on school accounts	8	10	4	1	1	2	-	1	8	17
Makes bank deposits	12	21	2	5	4	3	-	-	2	4
Sells supplies on order to teachers	18	20	1	4	1	2	-	1	1	4
Sells supplies directly to children	4	7	1	3	2	1	2	-	10	14
Handles cafeteria money	17	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Handles milk money	16	19	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1

TABLE II

NUMBER OF RESPONSES RECEIVED FROM QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING
TYPE OF WORK HANDLED BY TYPISTS, DES MOINES
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, IOWA,
1959-60

Type of Performance	Always Single Two- Build- Build- ing ing	Frequently Single Two Build- Build- ing ing	Occasionally Single Two Build- Build- ing ing	Rarely Single Two Build- Build- ing ing	Never Single Two Build- Build- ing ing
Types principal's bulletins	13	31	6	1	1
Types agenda for staff meetings	6	11	5	6	2
Types early dismissal notices	14	26	3	5	2
Types annual letters to teachers	11	24	3	2	1
Types orders for free curriculum materials	4	11	5	2	8

TABLE III

TYPE AND NUMBER OF FORM REPORT RESPONSIBILITIES PERFORMED BY
THE CLERK, REPORTED IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONNAIRE, DES
MOINES ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, IOWA,
1959-60

Type of Performance	Always Single Build- ing	Frequently Single Build- ing	Occasionally Single Build- ing	Rarely Single Build- ing	Never Single Build- ing
Monthly reports on attendance	19 31	1 -	1 -	- -	- -
Annual book inventory	15 23	1 1	2 -	1 -	2 5
Payroll teachers	19 31	1 -	- -	- -	1 -
Payroll custodians	19 30	1 -	- -	- -	1 1
Bus transportation - public	5 11	- 1	- -	2 -	3 4
Bus transportation - school district	7 10	- -	- -	1 2	4 3
Requisitions for books	17 26	3 2	1 -	1 -	- -
Requisitions for supplies	17 26	3 3	- -	1 -	- -
Pickup slips	15 26	4 3	1 -	1 -	- -
Library orders composite (since 1959)	19 25	1 2	1 1	- -	- 1
Orders for materials out of fund #3578C	6 15	5 3	2 3	4 2	4 6
Supply inventory	16 20	1 3	2 2	- -	2 3

All fifty-two buildings reported the clerk as being able to operate the duplicating machine. The clerk duplicates the following items as "General Office Work" as shown in Table IV.

One two-building principal marked the item "duplicates the principal's bulletin" as not applying. In addition, one single building principal and one two-building principal indicated "duplicates agenda for staff meetings" did not apply.

In the area of "miscellaneous duties performed by the clerk" the principals answered the questionnaire as shown in Table V.

Three of the ten principals who indicated "ring the bells from the office" did not apply were single building principals. Two principal-consultants said this item did not apply. One principal-consultant marked "distributed Tuesday bag materials" as not applying with the added note that the clerk was not in the building that day. The items "give first-aid treatment" and "take charge of lost and found items" were marked by one two-building principal as not applying.

Many principals responded to the question, "What other office duties does the clerk perform?" The additional items listed by the three principal-consultants and the frequency the duty is performed are shown in Table VI. This table shows that one clerk frequently "keeps open supply cupboards stocked;" one clerk always "keeps inventories up to date;" one clerk

TABLE IV

TYPE AND NUMBER OF DUPLICATOR OPERATING RESPONSIBILITIES
PERFORMED BY THE CLERK AS REPORTED IN RESPONSE TO
QUESTIONNAIRE, DES MOINES ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS,
IOWA, 1959-60

Type of Duplicating Performance	Always		Frequently		Occasionally		Rarely		Never	
	Single Build- ing	Two- Build- ing	Single Build- ing	Two- Build- ing	Single Build- ing	Two- Build- ing	Single Build- ing	Two- Build- ing	Single Build- ing	Two- Build- ing
Principal's bulletins	14	26	5	4	2	-	-	-	-	-
Agenda for staff meetings	7	21	4	4	4	1	1	-	3	4
Early dismissal notices	16	25	2	5	1	1	1	-	1	-

TABLE V

TYPE AND FREQUENCY OF MISCELLANEOUS DUTIES PERFORMED BY
CLERKS IN DES MOINES ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, IOWA,
AS REPORTED IN QUESTIONNAIRE, 1959-60

Duties	Always Single Build- ing	Frequently Single Build- ing	Occasionally Single Build- ing	Rarely Single Build- ing	Never Single Build- ing
Monitor the radio	9	16	7	3	1
Ring the bells from the office	2	1	3	2	7
Distribute mail daily	11	15	6	8	4
Distribute Tuesday bag materials	8	14	8	3	2
Take telephone calls	7	15	14	14	2
Make appointments for principal	1	4	7	10	5
Do the office filing	9	24	9	6	1
Give first aid treatment	-	1	-	-	3
Library typing (card-entries)	10	20	3	2	6
Take charge of lost and found items	2	-	-	1	4

always "types any school correspondence;" one clerk always and one clerk frequently "types materials for consultant services;" one clerk always "makes composite sheets for consultant reports;" one clerk frequently "types letters related to school business and consultant job;" and two clerks always "keep office bulletin boards." This table also shows that one clerk frequently "prepares materials for teacher workshops;" and one clerk occasionally "types notes for speeches."

TABLE VI

TYPE AND NUMBER OF OTHER OFFICE DUTIES PERFORMED BY CLERKS,
DES MOINES ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, IOWA, AS REPORTED BY 3
PRINCIPAL-CONSULTANTS TO QUESTIONNAIRE, 1959-60

Description of Duties	: Always	: Frequently	: Occasionally
Keeps open supply cupboards stocked	:	1	:
Keeps inventories up to date	1	:	:
Types any school correspondence	1	:	:
Types materials for consultant services	1	1	:
Makes composite sheets for consultant reports	1	:	:
Types letters related to school business and consultant job	:	1	:
Keeps office bulletin boards	2	:	:
Prepares materials for teacher workshops	:	1	:
Types notes for speeches	:	:	1

Fifteen additional items were listed by principals who are assigned to two buildings. The items and frequency of performance, as listed by the principals, are recorded in Table VII.

TABLE VII

TYPE AND NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL OFFICE DUTIES PERFORMED BY CLERKS, DES MOINES ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, IOWA, AS REPORTED IN REPLY TO QUESTIONNAIRE, 1959-60
(TWO-BUILDINGS)

Description of Duties	Two-buildings		
	Always	Frequently	Occasionally
Keeps open supply cup-boards stocked		4	
Keeps office bulletin boards		2	
Daily bulletins to teachers			2
Compiles items contributed to school paper			1
Distributes materials			2
Meets - visits with parents in office until principal arrives		1	
Duplicates monthly news-letter to parents	2	1	
Drives for payroll checks	2		2
Dusts office		1	
Gets milk order to dairy	2		
Handles fund from P.T.A.	2		
Makes family file and keeps it up to date	2		

TABLE VII (continued)

Description of Duties		Two-buildings	
		Always	Frequently:Occasionally
Keeps an attendance check up to date for principal's use	2		
Helps in checking in library books			2
Makes cafeteria reports	2		

Twenty-four different additional duty items were listed and frequency of times of performance by single building principals. These items are shown in Table VIII.

The second major part of the questionnaire dealt with work done by the clerk directly for teachers. All the principals, with one exception, answered "yes" to the question, "Does the clerk do any work directly for teachers?" The one negatively answered questionnaire did have responses for every questioned item as to the frequency each job was performed. It was stated in the questionnaire that the work done for the teachers by the clerk would first be cleared through the principal.

Table IX shows typing jobs done by the clerk for teachers and how often the clerk does the jobs.

In answer to the question, "Does the clerk check any standardized tests?" six questionnaires were answered "yes."

TABLE VIII

TYPE AND NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL OFFICE DUTIES PERFORMED BY
CLERKS, DES MOINES ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, IOWA, AS REPORTED
BY SINGLE BUILDING PRINCIPALS IN REPLY TO
QUESTIONNAIRE, 1959-60

Description of Duties	: Always	: Frequently	: Occasionally
Makes cafeteria reports	: 1	:	:
Calls Hillis School daily and reports number want- ing hot lunch	: 1	:	:
Collects art fees and makes reports	: 1	:	:
Does all bookkeeping	: 1	:	:
Distributes materials	:	: 1	:
Orders visual aid materials	:	: 1	:
Charge of transfers and new pupils	:	: 1	:
Bus list	: 1	:	:
St. special education attendance reports	: 1	:	:
City-wide bus pickup schedules	: 1	:	:
Taxi cab travel schedules	: 1	:	:
Reports for P.T.A.	: 1	:	:
Ticket sales for fun night	:	: 1	:
Enrolls pupils	: 1	: 1	:
Keeps lunchroom reports	: 2	:	:
Sells meal tickets	: 2	:	:
Punches meal tickets	: 2	:	:
Services liquid duplicator	: 1	:	:

TABLE VIII (continued)

Description of Duties	: Always	: Frequently	: Occasionally
Keeps supplies for liquid duplicator	: 1	:	:
Checks visual aids in and out	: 1	:	:
Checks orderliness of materials	:	: 1	:
Puts dates on attendance blanks	: 1	:	:
Teaches parent how to use duplicator for P.T.A. bulletin	:	:	: 1
Receives visitors to office	:	: 1	:

These six affirmative replies were from two-building principals. Twenty-one of the forty-four answering "no" to the question were single building principals. The three principal-consultants answered "no" to the question. This question was not answered on two of the questionnaires.

The questionnaire asked if clerks helped teachers do reports as to recording kinds of data. The questions asked were in regard to recording heights and weights on report cards, recording standardized test data on test cards, and making composites of test tallies. Table X shows how these questions were answered.

TABLE IX

ANSWERS RECEIVED FROM PRINCIPALS IN REPLY TO QUESTION, "DOES THE CLERK DO ANY WORK DIRECTLY FOR TEACHERS?," DES MOINES ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, IOWA, 1959-60

Description of Duties	Always		Frequently		Occasionally		Rarely		Never	
	Single Build- ing	Two- Build- ing	Single Build- ing	Two- Build- ing	Single Build- ing	Two- Build- ing	Single Build- ing	Two- Build- ing	Single Build- ing	Two- Build- ing
Type worksheets	-	-	4	10	8	11	4	7	4	4
Type teacher-made tests	-	-	3	8	9	10	4	7	5	5
Class list for home-room use	9	21	5	14	3	1	3	1	1	-
Class list on daily attendance form	4	14	3	6	6	-	2	2	6	9
Failure letters to parents	9	19	3	7	3	2	3	-	3	3
Orders for specific free curriculum materials	2	5	5	10	5	8	5	2	4	5
Pupils' names on progress reports	6	18	3	3	5	3	4	-	3	7
Permanent seatwork	-	-	1	10	9	7	6	5	5	9

TABLE X

ANSWERS RECEIVED FROM PRINCIPALS IN REPLY TO QUESTION, "DOES THE
CLERK RECORD HEIGHTS AND WEIGHTS ON REPORT CARDS?," DES MOINES
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, IOWA, 1959-60

Description of Duties:	Always		Frequently		Occasionally		Rarely		Never	
	Single Build- ing	Two- Build- ing	Single Build- ing	Two- Build- ing	Single Build- ing	Two- Build- ing	Single Build- ing	Two- Build- ing	Single Build- ing	Two- Build- ing
Records heights and weights on report cards	-	5	-	1	-	3	2	3	19	25
Records standardized test data	2	4	4	6	5	11	3	2	6	8
Makes a composite of test tallies	8	9	3	4	5	6	2	2	3	8

NOTE: Each question in this area was reported as not applying by one respondent.

Answers to the question about filing help the clerk gives the teachers showed the results recorded in Table XI.

Several principals made a notation by their "never" responses to "files test cards," saying the teachers kept these cards in their own desks.

The principals indicated the number of times clerks helped teachers enter or transfer pupils as shown in Table XII.

The clerk helps the teachers with their duplicating of worksheets and teacher-made tests as frequently as shown in Table XIII.

Miscellaneous duties the clerk does for teachers and frequency of performance are recorded in Table XIV.

Seventeen principals marked the question, "Tune in radio programs from office manual" as not applying with the notation they did not have this system in their situation.

Additional duties being done directly for the teacher by the clerk as listed by the principals are shown in Table XV.

TABLE XI

ANSWERS RECEIVED FROM PRINCIPALS CONCERNING CLERICAL FILING HELP
OFFERED TEACHERS, DES MOINES ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, IOWA, 1959-60

Type of Filing	Always Single Build- ing	Frequently Single Build- ing	Occasionally Single Build- ing	Rarely Single Build- ing	Never Single Build- ing
Emergency sheets	14	25	3	3	1
Office record cards	16	24	4	6	1
Nurse's cards	9	7	3	4	13
Test cards	9	13	5	6	10

TABLE XII

ANSWERS RECEIVED FROM PRINCIPALS IN REPLY TO QUESTION, "DOES THE
CLERK TYPE UPPER PORTION OF O.R. CARD?" DES MOINES
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, IOWA, 1959-60

Typing Duties	Always		Frequently		Occasionally		Rarely		Never	
	Single	Two-	Single	Two-	Single	Two-	Single	Two-	Single	Two-
	Build- ing	Build- ing	Build- ing	Build- ing	Build- ing	Build- ing	Build- ing	Build- ing	Build- ing	Build- ing
Types upper portion of O.R. card	11	15	7	9	-	1	-	3	3	2
Makes out nurse's card	8	14	3	4	2	-	2	5	6	8
Makes out test card	9	13	3	9	2	3	2	-	5	6
Makes out basic reading card	8	13	2	4	1	2	2	3	8	10
Types upper part of cumulative record	8	13	3	6	2	6	1	3	7	4
Requests birth certificates	9	16	9	7	2	4	-	-	1	4
Requests records from former schools	8	16	9	6	2	4	-	-	2	5
Makes out transfers	3	6	3	8	6	8	2	2	6	7

TABLE XIII

ANSWERS RECEIVED FROM PRINCIPALS IN REPLY TO QUESTION, "DOES THE
CLERK DUPLICATE FOR THE TEACHERS?,"
DES MOINES ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS,
IOWA, 1959-60

Types of Duplicating Duties	: Always :		: Frequently :		: Occasionally :		: Rarely :		: Never :	
	: Single Two- :		: Single Two- :		: Single Two- :		: Single Two- :		: Single Two- :	
	: Build- Build- :		: Build- Build- :		: Build- Build- :		: Build- Build- :		: Build- Build- :	
	ing	ing	ing	ing	ing	ing	ing	ing	ing	ing
Teachers' worksheets	-	2	5	11	11	7	4	6	1	5
Teacher-made tests	-	-	4	8	12	12	3	7	2	4

TABLE XIV

MISCELLANEOUS DUTIES PERFORMED BY CLERKS AS INDICATED BY PRINCIPALS IN REPLY TO
QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO DES MOINES ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, IOWA, 1959-60

Types of Miscellaneous Duties	: Always		: Frequently		: Occasionally		: Rarely		: Never	
	:Single :Build- :ing	Two- Build- ing	:Single :Build- :ing	Two- Build- ing	:Single :Build- :ing	Two- Build- ing	:Single :Build- :ing	Two- Build- ing	:Single :Build- :ing	Two- Build- ing
Receive parent telephone calls	: 6	4	: 13	19	: 2	3	: 1	-	: -	3
Tune in radio programs from office manual	: 8	9	: 4	4	: -	1	: 1	2	: 2	4
Type general information: on census and guidance: cards	: 12	10	: 2	6	: 1	3	: 3	3	: 4	5
Type and duplicate consent slips for trips for younger children	: 2	3	: 4	7	: 3	7	: 5	2	: 8	10
Make routine telephone calls for films scheduling conferences: and trips	: 1	3	: 3	9	: 3	2	: 4	6	: 11	8

TABLE XV

ADDITIONAL DUTIES DONE DIRECTLY FOR THE TEACHERS BY THE CLERK
AS LISTED BY THE PRINCIPALS IN REPLY TO QUESTIONNAIRE,
DES MOINES ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, IOWA, 1959-60

Description of Additional Duties	: Always		: Frequently		: Occasionally	
	: Single	: Two-	: Single	: Two-	: Single	: Two-
	: Build-	: Build-	: Build-	: Build-	: Build-	: Build-
	: ing	: ing	: ing	: ing	: ing	: ing
Study helps for teachers	1					
Lines chart paper					1	
Cuts letters for bulletin boards					1	
Covered easels		1				
Writes receipts for art fees and workbooks beginning of semester					1	
Completes insurance forms					2	
Types instructions on fire drill cards	1					
Types reports for teachers on curriculum committees			1	2		
Checks all records for transfers for accuracy and complete information	1					
Keeps curriculum materials up to date, inserts corrections and additions in guides	1					
Calls parents of sick children			1	1		
Types and duplicates collections of stories				1		
Gets materials for teachers from files				1		
Keeps teacher illness records			1			
Receives substitute teachers			1			
Sells lunchroom tickets	1					
Punches lunchroom tickets	1					
Makes out notes for announcements of community, such as scouts, campfire, et cetera						1

TABLE XV (continued)

Description of Additional Duties	: Always :		: Frequently :		: Occasionally :	
	: Single	: Two-	: Single	: Two-	: Single	: Two-
	: Build-	: Build-	: Build-	: Build-	: Build-	: Build-
	: ing	: ing	: ing	: ing	: ing	: ing
Supervises playground						1
Schedules	1					
Counts out pamphlets		2				
Counts number of families in district		2				
Lists oldest and only children by rooms		2				
Assembles supplies and materials for workshop						2
Checks on needed supplies and distributes them				2		
Confirms appointments with parents for teacher						2
Puts dates on daily attendance forms				2		
Checks out reference books	1					

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was the purpose of this study to make a survey of the duties performed by the clerks in the Des Moines Independent Community Elementary Schools. The duties were classified under the headings "General office work done by the clerk" and "Work done directly for teachers with approval by the principal."

I. SUMMARY

An investigation of what authorities believed to be essential and pertinent to the duties of clerks in public elementary schools was made by examining professional textbooks, journals, handbooks, and pamphlets. Information concerning the organization of clerical help in the Des Moines elementary schools was obtained through interviews with one of the men who was responsible for clerical help in the schools. In addition information was obtained through the use of a questionnaire sent to the Des Moines elementary school principals.

From these sources a comparison was made to show the number of clerical duties performed in buildings served with a full-time clerk and buildings where the services of the clerks were shared.

III. CONCLUSIONS

From the survey it was concluded:

1. That all clerks in the elementary buildings were always productively occupied.
2. That differences in principals' schedules accounted for a large variation in clerical duties.
3. That clerks performed a wide variety of duties.
4. That clerks who were employed in more than one building did many of the same jobs as clerks employed in just one building.
5. That clerks in buildings with cafeterias spent much time with cafeteria functions.
6. That all clerks operated the duplicating machine.
7. That clerks employed in more than one building were not able to perform duties that occur daily.
8. That clerks who were employed in more than one building did as varied work directly for teachers as did clerks who are employed in one building full time.
9. That all clerks had responsibility in completing forms as general office work.
10. That clerks in buildings having special education classes had a wide variety of duties pertaining to the special education classes.
11. That checking of standardized tests was not a duty of clerks in forty-four of the fifty schools.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made:

1. That a study of clerical duties as revealed in this project be made by a committee whose members represent principals, clerks, and teachers. This committee could set up a uniform list of routine duties to be done by all clerks in all buildings.
2. That direction of the committee work be under one head.
3. That a permanent committee be organized so that revisions can proceed regularly and not be dependent upon spasmodic attention.
4. That a manual be developed to include:
 - a. directions for completing printed forms used in the elementary schools
 - b. standard procedure for different forms of letters
 - c. procedure and form used by teachers enlisting clerical help
 - d. directions concerning whom to call for information in specific areas such as requisitions, deliveries, Department of Pupil Adjustment.
5. That in addition to a manual, a pre-service training program be instigated to acquaint new clerks with usual building responsibilities.

6. That the committee keep, in writing, a record of its proceedings so that other systems faced with a like problem might utilize the values and techniques which this committee may evolve.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

COPY OF LETTER SENT TO PRINCIPALS, DES MOINES
PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

September 28, 1960

Dear Principal:

Is the clerk in the building or buildings of which you are principal worth her "weight in gold" or a "jewel" as expressed by some? What does she do to deserve such praise? Do most of her duties entail general office work or do the teachers in the building receive considerable help, too? What does the clerk do as general office work and help for the teachers in your situation?

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree Master of Science in Education, I am writing a field report on clerical duties in Public Elementary Schools in Des Moines.

Enclosed is a check list questionnaire covering many of the duties clerks perform in elementary schools throughout the nation. If you are principal in more than one school, two questionnaires have been enclosed. It is understandable that the duties performed in both schools would not necessarily be the same.

The data gathered through this questionnaire will remain confidential as a part of the information in this field report. It is hoped that conclusions can be drawn from this investigation

that will further the services of clerical help for the principals and teachers in the Des Moines Elementary Schools.

Sincerely yours, aise

Enc. Mary P. Kaiser

Mary P. Kaiser

the age of the respondent.

Example: If you have a respondent who

handles cafeteria work, you should check the following

If duties other than those mentioned are performed by the clerk in your building, please list under category "Other duties."

Please respond to all of the following school year regardless of whether or not the items will not have been encountered in the current year.

The following thirteen areas are classified "General office

work" and are to be checked if performed by the clerk.

1. Does the clerk handle the following duties?

2. Does the clerk handle the following duties?

3. Does the clerk handle the following duties?

4. Does the clerk handle the following duties?

5. Does the clerk handle the following duties?

6. Does the clerk handle the following duties?

7. Does the clerk handle the following duties?

8. Does the clerk handle the following duties?

9. Does the clerk handle the following duties?

10. Does the clerk handle the following duties?

A SURVEY OF THE DUTIES OF CLERKS IN THE DES MOINES
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
1959-60

Directions for completing the questionnaire

Please answer all questions by checking (X) either yes or no.
Circle the appropriate symbol as to the frequency of times
each job is performed by the clerk.

A always, F frequently, O occasionally, R rarely, N never.

If an item does not apply in your situation draw a line
through all responses.

Example: If you have no cafeteria ---
handle cafeteria money? ~~A F O R N~~

If duties other than those mentioned are performed by the
clerk in your building (s) please list under category "other
duties."

Please respond as of the 1959-60 school year because several
of the items will not have been encountered in the current
year.

The following thirteen areas are classified "General office
work done by the clerk."

1. Are you a single building principal? YES___NO___
2. Do you have a clerk full-time? YES___NO___
3. Are you a principal in two buildings? YES___NO___
4. Are you a principal and a consultant? YES___NO___
5. Does the clerk in this building handle
money? YES___NO___

6. If the clerk does handle money does she
- handle school accounts? A F O R N
 - write checks on school accounts? A F O R N
 - make bank deposits? A F O R N
 - sell supplies on order to teachers? A F O R N
 - sell supplies directly to children? A F O R N
 - handle cafeteria money? A F O R N
 - handle milk money? A F O R N
7. In the area of typing does the clerk type the
- principal's bulletins? A F O R N
 - agenda for the staff meeting? A F O R N
 - early dismissal notices? A F O R N
 - annual letters to teachers? A F O R N
 - orders for free curriculum materials? A F O R N
8. Does the clerk have form report responsibilities? YES__NO__
- monthly reports on attendance? A F O R N
 - annual book inventory? A F O R N
 - payroll-teacher's? A F O R N
 - payroll-custodian's? A F O R N
 - bus transportation-public? A F O R N
 - bus transportation-school district? A F O R N
 - requisitions for books? A F O R N
 - requisitions for supplies? A F O R N
 - pickup slips? A F O R N
 - library orders-composite (since 1959)? A F O R N

order for materials out of fund #357SC? A F O R N
 supply inventory? A F O R N

9. Does the clerk operate the duplicating
 machine? YES ___ NO ___

10. If the clerk does operate the duplicator
 does she
 duplicate the principal's bulletins? A F O R N
 duplicate agenda for staff meetings? A F O R N
 duplicate early dismissal notices? A F O R N

11. In the area of miscellaneous duties does the clerk
 monitor the radio? A F O R N
 ring the bells from the office? A F O R N
 distribute mail daily? A F O R N
 distribute Tuesday bag materials? A F O R N
 take telephone calls? A F O R N
 make appointments for principal? A F O R N
 do the office filing? A F O R N
 give first-aid treatment? A F O R N
 library typing (cards-entries)? A F O R N
 take charge of lost and found items? A F O R N

12. What other office duties does the clerk perform?

Please list.

_____	A F O R N
_____	A F O R N
_____	A F O R N
_____	A F O R N

_____ A F O R N

_____ A F O R N

13. Do you feel the clerk in your building is
productively occupied? A F O R N

These nine areas are classified: "Work done directly for
teachers by the clerk." Work is cleared through principal.

14. Does the clerk do any work directly for
teachers? YES__NO__

15. In the area of typing does the clerk type
worksheets? A F O R N

teacher made tests? A F O R N

class list for homeroom use? A F O R N

class list on daily attendance form? A F O R N

failure letters to parents? A F O R N

2. orders for specific free curriculum
materials? A F O R N

pupils' names on progress reports? A F O R N

permanent seatwork? A F O R N

16. Does the clerk check any standardized
tests? YES__NO__

17. As to reports does the clerk record

height and weight on report cards? A F O R N

standard test data? A F O R N

make a composite of test tallies? A F O R N

and duplicate consent slips for

trips for sales & children? A F O R N

18. Does the clerk handle filing in these areas
- emergency sheets?A F O R N
 - office record cards?A F O R N
 - nurse's cards?A F O R N
 - test cards?A F O R N
19. When pupils enter or transfer does the clerk
- type upper portion of O.R. card? . . .A F O R N
 - make out nurse's card?A F O R N
 - make out test card?A F O R N
 - make out basic reading card?A F O R N
 - type upper part of cumulative record? .A F O R N
 - request birth certificates?A F O R N
 - request records from former schools? .A F O R N
 - make out transfers?A F O R N
20. Does the clerk duplicate for the teachers in these ways:
- worksheets?A F O R N
 - teacher made tests?A F O R N
21. In the area of miscellaneous duties does the clerk
- receive parent telephone calls? . . .A F O R N
 - tune in radio programs from office
 - manual?A F O R N
 - type general information on census and
 - guidance cards?A F O R N
 - type and duplicate consent slips for
 - trips for younger children? . . .A F O R N

make routine telephone calls for films,

scheduling conferences and trips? . A F O R N

22. What other duties are done directly for the
teachers by the clerk? Please list.

_____	A F O R N
_____	A F O R N
_____	A F O R N
_____	A F O R N